

CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY.

THE DATE DEFINITELY SETTLED BY POPE JULIUS.

Early Christians Incorporated Many Pagan Customs in Its Celebration. Origin of the Name of the Festival, Customs and Superstitions.

HERE is something akin to sadness in the fact that in tracing the origin of many of our church festivals we find it in pagan celebrations antedating the Christian era, writes M. E. Munroe in the New York Home Journal. There is nothing certain even about the birthday of Christ. Some authorities assert that December was in the rainy season, when no shepherds could have been "watching their flocks by night." Others claim that it was in the dry season, when shepherds were on duty day and night. In the controversy over the date, extending from December to May, Pope Julius (337-352) had an investigation made by St. Cyril and was satisfied that the 25th of December was correct. It was so established in the Roman church, and before the end of the fourth century the dictum was universally accepted.

This acceptance was made easier because the date was that of the great festival of the winter solstice, the saturnalia, which was celebrated in all parts of the world from Dec. 25 to Jan. 6. At that season houses, temples and shrines were profusely decorated with evergreens, holly, laurel and sometimes ivy. No mistletoe was used in the decorations on account of the Druidical superstitions regarding its peculiar and dangerous power. One of these superstitions, however, has become the heritage of all ages:

Those who kiss under the mistletoe bough Together will walk to the altar.

The early Christians incorporated as many pagan customs as possible with their celebrations and festivals as a matter of expediency, and in the Roman saturnalia, with its decorations, its Yule log, its candles and tinsel laden trees and gifts, there was much that even today forms part of our ceremonial.

During the saturnalia all restraint was removed, and the stemming of the tide was so nearly impossible that it is not hard to realize the difficulties the Christians had in weeding out the evils of this festival before it became our festival of Christmas, so called from the Christ mass, which was celebrated on Dec. 25. Our Christmas carol was



A CHRISTMAS EVE CUSTOM IN HOLLAND, originally a hymn to Saturn, for one of the principal features of the saturnalia was the singing of hymns of praise to the gods Saturn and Bacchus, and the composers of odes in their honor were richly rewarded. Even the family banquet, so dear to our hearts, is a relic of the bacchanalian era.

Various were the early superstitions in different countries, the most curious being in Scandinavia. In the German Alps it was held that on Christmas eve "cattle fell on their knees in adoring worship," being given the power of speech during that one night, but woe to the person who overheard or listened to their converse, for the reaper Death would surely find him, let him hide as he would, before seven days were passed. Maidens thought to find the key which would unlock the door to their future life, and especially among the peasantry of Poland was full reliance placed upon the result of these mystic rites.

Among Christmas eve customs one in Holland is of exceeding interest. In all the towns and villages at the midnight hour the men in varied costumes meet in the principal squares chanting the "Gloria In Excelsis." Proud is the man selected by vote to be the "star bearer." A large star in which are several lighted candles all shining as one is mounted on one end of a long pole. This star is symbolical of the star that guided the three kings to Bethlehem, and the effect of its light in the dark and winding streets at the head of the long procession of men slowly marching to the music of the "Gloria In Excelsis" sung in chorus is deeply impressive. A sumptuous supper is served after the devotions are ended, and thus Christmas day begins.

Christmas eve everywhere was the beginning of Christmas joys. In Germany the old customs still prevail to a great extent. The Christmas tree, with its gifts, followed by a grand supper, has long held its own on Christmas eve, Christmas day being spent in paying and receiving visits and talking over the extent of Santa Claus' attentions.

Merry Christmas.

When Old Christmas brought his sports again, 'Twas Christmas brought the mightiest tale, 'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale; A Christmas gambol oft would cheer The poor man's heart through half the year. —Scott.

Kissing the Cattle.

A Queer Montenegrin Custom.

P EASANTS of the mountains of Montenegro have a peculiar Christmas eve custom. After the Yule log has been lighted the head of the house and the son who acts as the shepherd of the sheep flock go to the stables with candles and light up each corner of the interior alternately. Then they return to the door, and as each holds his candle high the animals are driven in one by one. The household wife then sprinkles a little wine over the oldest female of each of the different species of live stock and, having done this, kisses the animal on the head. This is a unique Christmas practice, and antiquarians have been able to find no reason for it nor have they been able to set the time when it began.

The kissing ceremony over, the family "clucks" like a hen and "cheeps" like a chicken. This is said certainly to insure a plentiful increase of the fowls during the coming year.

It should have been said that before the fire is lighted the iron shovel and the poker are hidden away. The Christmas fire must be stirred only with a piece of wood. As soon as a piece falls from the end of the burning Yule log one of the sons of the family picks the bit up in his teeth and at the imminent danger of being burned carries it thus into the yard and there drops it. Now of a certainty no witches can get in during the Christmas festivities.

The carcass for the Christmas feast—sheep, pig or goat—is roasted whole. In carving it no rib of the creature must be broken. Otherwise a dire calamity is in store for the family. A cake is baked on the hearth, and as soon as the spot where it was cooked is cool each member of the family puts his bare foot on the place and is thus insured against blistered feet for a year.

When writing of Saxon Christmas legends and odd Christmas ceremonies one writes in the past almost wholly. In the Black mountain region the old time customs are the customs of today, and time seems to have been unable to change their infinite variety.

Plum Pudding.

Chop three-quarters of a pound of suet very fine and mix with the suet one-eighth of a pound of bread crumbs. Beat the yolks of five and the whites of three eggs light and add them to the crumbs and suet, with half a pound of powdered sugar. Have three-quarters of a pound of dried currants and the same amount of raisins weighed after they are seeded. Sift over the fruit one-quarter of a pound of flour and stir this into the other ingredients. Add one-quarter of a dessertspoonful of salt, one-quarter of a pound of candied orange and lemon peel finely chopped, one-sixteenth of a pound of blanched and chopped almonds and one-quarter of an ounce of pulverized cloves and cinnamon mixed. Add one glass of brandy and one nutmeg grated. Beat the mixture very thoroughly before putting it into a buttered mold or cloth and let it boil steadily eight hours. Serve with burning brandy and two sauces.

The Christmas Wishbone.

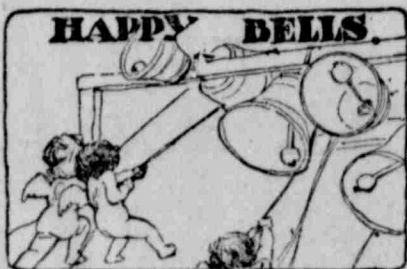
The wishbone of the Christmas turkey is a favorite means of divination in Virginia, where it is called the fortune bone. Two unmarried persons, each taking hold of one end of the bone, pull against each other until the bone breaks. The one who gets the shorter end will be the first of the two to marry. Further divination is by placing the short end of the bone over the door. The first unmarried person of the opposite sex who walks under the bone is supposed to be the future wife or husband of the person to whom the bone belongs.

Roast Duck.

For a small Christmas dinner a pair of tender ducklings may be substituted for the regulation turkey. A very tasteful dressing is made by mixing a minced onion that has been fried in butter with two cupfuls of crumbs, a tablespoonful of butter and half a cupful of thick, stewed tomatoes. Season highly. Bake every few minutes and roast rare. Skim the fat from the gravy in the pan, add the stewed giblets and thicken and season. A tart jellylike currant or plum or spiced plums should accompany it.

The Yuletide Cigar.

Wives whose husbands smoke are again reminded in view of the approach of Christmas that the man who smokes intelligently would rather receive one cigar costing 25 cents than a hundred costing 50 cents. We sound this note of warning merely in the interests of peace and good will.



O happy bells, through coming years We hear in your glad sounding The message still of peace, good will, All jarring discords blending!
O bells of God, ring on, our souls To grander action moving, Till all our days are Christmas days Of living and of serving.
—Caroline A. Dugan.



A YULETIDE DAINTY.

Origin of the Plum Pudding Was a Monstrous Sausage.

In many parts of England candles are put in the windows on Christmas eve, and the village seems illuminated, the inhabitants little suspecting that this usage is thousands of years old and had its origin in the fact that every devout fire worshiper kindled a fresh fire on his hearthstone on the eve of the sun god's festival and opened his doors and windows, too, if he had any, to let the blaze shine out into the darkness.

The Christmas carol is a relic of the songs once sung in honor of the sun; the Christmas pudding a reminder of the giant globular sausages made of that shape in honor of the sun and served to our lusty ancestors at this joyous season. Beef, mutton, pork, fish, anything that was handy, entered into the composition of these monstrous wursts. A hash of all meats that could be procured was mixed with flour and boiled in the largest pot belonging to the establishment. Steaming hot, it was placed on a great platter, a bowl of honey was poured over it, a sprig of mistletoe adorned its summit, and in solemn state it was borne from kitchen to dining hall.

Sometimes a chief distinguished himself at Yuletide by preparing puddings of enormous size, and instances are on record where these festival dainties were carried by four men, preceded by a couple of pipers and followed by a procession of cooks, pot washers and scullions, who flourished spoons and spits in token of their craft and expected to be rewarded for their labors by gratuities from the guests.

Christmas Menu.

Oysters Served on Half Shell.
Consomme.
Olives, Almonds.
Fish, Continental, Oyster Sauce.
Browned Potatoes.
Turkey, Cranberry Molds.
Creamed Cauliflower.
Celery, Mayonnaise, Walers.
Pumpkin Pie.
White House Ice Cream, Coconut Pointlets.
Steamed Raisins, Bontons.
Crab Cider, Coffee.

SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS.

Festival Not So Popular as in Some Countries.

In Scotland they wish one another "a merry Christmas," like the rest of Christendom, and exchange gifts, but the festival of the Nativity has not been popular among the Scottish people, at least since the reformation, says the Chicago Record. It is only in recent years that Christmas has begun to be regarded as a holiday to be observed with religious and social rites. The winter festivities in Scotland in the olden time consumed fully six weeks before the sun entered Capricorn and turned again with light giving power in its apparent course.

The advent of the winter was marked by the Halloween celebration. This was for many years one of the most distinctive and widely observed of Scottish festivals, especially among the rural residents, who practiced with great fidelity divers superstitious rites associated with it. But the picturesque side of the festival is now a thing of the past. The Yule festival, a remnant of the old pagan rites paid to the great Scandinavian god Thor, is now represented by the Christmas roast turkey and plum pudding, which have found their way from the south across the border, and during the Christmas fortnight much charming hospitality is dispensed in house and hall. A happy spirit is abroad, and rich and poor are more or less affected by it.

Christmas Toys.

The great toy center of the world is Bavaria. From the towns of Nuremberg, Fuerth and Sonneberg come nine-tenths of the toys made in Europe. The famous French doll is made in Nuremberg, as are also many fine mechanical contrivances, such as walking dogs and cats and other animals with natural fur, which, according to popular supposition, are the direct output of the French capital.

They are a picturesque people, these toymakers. Whole families and colonies of them are engaged in toymaking. A father makes doll heads, for instance, and the other members of the family paint the features, affix the wig and assemble the parts of the body. The decorative painting on toy china-ware, wooden toys and blown glass Christmas tree ornaments is done almost exclusively by children.

Stuffing For Ducks.

Chop the liver fine and saute in a tablespoonful of hot butter with a tablespoonful of chopped onion. Mix with four ounces of bread (a fourth of a loaf) and a fourth of a cupful of butter melted in a fourth of a cupful of hot water. Add one tablespoonful of parsley chopped fine and the beaten yolk of an egg.

Old Time Superstitions.

Decorations of evergreens for temples and houses during the winter months were popular among the Romans and Druids, who practiced it for the same reason, in order to give aid to the dryads and wood spirits, who must die unless they had the shelter of their native foliage.

Christmas Notes.

Christmas greens proper are the holly, mistletoe, laurel, ivy and pine. Yew and cypress are unlucky except for churches.

Christmas wreaths may be allowed to remain until Ash Wednesday provided they do not wither.

The turkey is a native of America, but has been popular in England for over 300 years.

NOTICE.

Persons having claims against the late H. M. Powell will present them, properly proven to me for payment at once, to
J. T. LEAVELL, Admr.,
Gilberts-Creek, Ky.

FOR SALE OR RENT.

I desire to sell or rent my Farm of 156 acres, situated two miles south of Hustonville, on the Hustonville and Middleburg pike, known as a part of the George (Red-face) Carpenter land. All of it is in good state of cultivation, well-fenced and plenty of water. Has upon it a two-story 8-room frame dwelling and necessary outbuildings; good tobacco barn and stock barn. Sixty acres of the above land is virgin soil. Will sell at reasonable price or rent to a good man.
JOHN Mc DANIEL,
Mt. Salem, Ky.

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I will have my coal bins completed by Oct. 1 and will keep on hand three grades of the best coal; also salt and I will sell it to merchants by wagon load at a very small margin. Will continue to pay the highest prices Hickory Spokes, Staves and Headings Goods and Groceries at rock bottom prices. Give me a trial and I will save you money.
B. H. KING, MORELAND, KY.

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W. Logan Wood, Manager.

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POSTED.

The persons whose names appear below strictly forbid any hunting of game of any kind at any time of the year on their lands and will prosecute to the full extent of the law any who violate:

S. H. Baughman, J. K. Baughman,
Dr. Steele Bailey, J. E. Bruce,
S. T. Harris, E. P. Woods,
J. M. Pettus, W. T. Tucker,
H. C. Baughman, J. W. Baughman,
L. L. Doty, G. D. & W. H. Boone

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Porters meet all trains. Special attention to traveling men.

H. C. RUPLEY,

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Fit Guaranteed
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Surgeon
Dentist,
Stanford, Ky.

Office over McRoberts' Drug Store in the Overly Building

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DENTIST,
Stanford, Ky.

Office over Higgins & McKinney's Store
Telephone No. 48.

POSTED.

I hereby notify the public that my land is posted and that I will permit no hunting or trespassing of any kind on it. Violators will be punished to the full extent of the law. A. M. FELLAND.

MISS LIZZIE C. JONES,

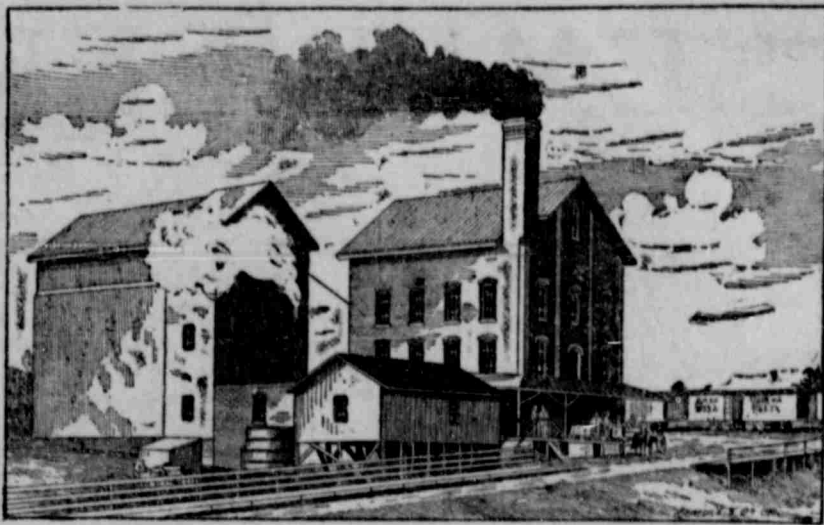
Of Moreland, has opened a Complete
Line of Millinery at Junction City
And invites the patronage of the public. Country Produce taken in exchange for goods.

PUBLIC SALE.

I will sell at public auction, at my place known as the Sam Cochran farm, 7 miles from Stanford and 3 from Crab Orchard, on the Stanford and Crab Orchard pike, on

FRIDAY, DEC. 28th, 1900,

The following property: Two-family horses, one fancy harness mare, 2 good milk cows, two calves, 35 shoats, improved Poland China, 2 brood sows, 1 2-horse wagon, 1 plow, 1 harrow, 2-horse plow, shod plow, 11-horse Hoosier wheel drill, good as new; hoes, rakes, harness, both plow and buggy; 40 barrels of corn, 75 shocks of fodder and my entire household and kitchen furniture. Terms made known on day of sale.
J. H. STEPHENS, Crab Orchard, Ky.



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